

The Hillside Messenger

A Message from the Rector: Advent and Christmas

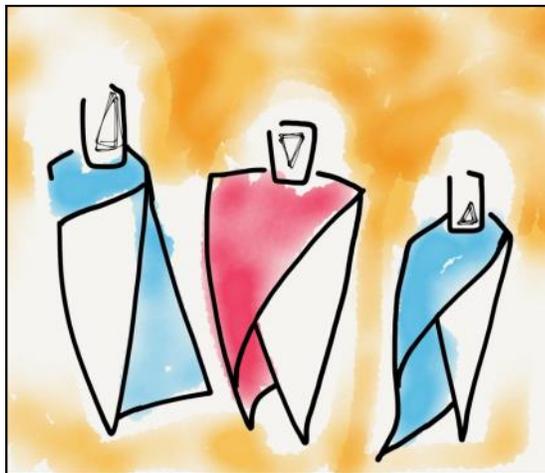
Hark!
A thrilling voice
is sounding;
"Christ is nigh,"
it seems to say;
"Cast away
the works of darkness,
O ye children
of the day."

This opening stanza of Hymn 9 from the *1940 Hymnal* is from Edward Caswall's translation of a Latin hymn of the sixth century. There are many voices in today's Western society which vie for the Christian's attention. There are many calls, many pressures, in the busy life of the average working American. There are so many, in fact, that Christians often find it hard to hear the voice of God calling to them. Even in earlier ages, it would be necessary to say, "Hark!" or "Listen!" It is as if a parent were taking a child for a walk in the countryside and should hear the

call of a particular bird, say a red-tailed hawk, and exclaim, "Listen! Did you hear that sound? It was a red-tailed hawk!"

But this is no ordinary bird-call, but the call of God to hear and pay attention to the messengers of the Lord Jesus Christ warning us that

come again. He is near, and because of this, Christians (who are "children of the day" because Christ has forgiven their sins and raised them to new life in Him) must utterly discard all the works of darkness. This reminds me of a passage in the book of the prophet *Isaiah*:



In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and the bats; To go into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for fear of the LORD, and for the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth.

Isaiah 2:20-21,
KJV

Christ is near and that, since we are children of the day, we must throw away the works of darkness. Yet the warning is also a joyful announcement to God's people; it is a thrilling voice! It pierces the air like a hawk's call, ringing with authority. The message is that Christ will soon

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Advent and Christmas

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In the presence of the coming King, all these idols and all these works of darkness will be like hateful things, trash to be thrown out and forgotten. Instead, we must be overjoyed at meeting with our King, our Lord and Savior! For the voice that warns is also the voice that thrills our heart, for we know that what he tells us to do is for our good. In keeping with this, St. Paul, in his *Epistle to the Romans* urges Christians to “cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light” (*Romans 13:12*, KJV), since the night is almost over and the day is near. If we complain that thousands of years have passed and Christ has not yet come again, we miss the point. It is not the length of time that has passed, but the urgency of using the time that remains to us to live in joyful expectation of Christ’s second coming and in doing those deeds of righteousness and acts of mercy and loving-kindness we long to be found engaged in doing at the moment of Christ’s coming. How will Christ find us when He comes again? It is right that this question should occupy our minds and that we should reflect deeply on it. Some believers think they can stubbornly persist in their sins until Christ comes again because at His coming they will be transformed in-

stantly to a state of perfection, being instantaneously sanctified. While we should not doubt the truth of the joyful reality of sanctification, we must also note that to continue in our sins is to waste the time we have been given to grow in grace (*II St. Peter 3*). This doctrine is intended to bring joy and peace to all who cooperate with the Holy Spirit in seeking the presence of God in their lives and drawing closer to Him in spirit.

Even now, then, no matter how far off we imagine Christ’s second coming to be, we must not be found wanting in the virtues God commands us to practice in our lives. We must embrace them all the more and clothe ourselves with them, just as we have clothed ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ by having been baptized into union with Him in Holy Baptism and as we promised, at Confirmation, to follow Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. It is this purpose that St. Paul had in mind in blessing the Thessalonian Christians in this way:

And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it.

I Thessalonians
5:23-24, KJV

Blamelessness in God’s sight is the prize that Christians trust and hope in the Lord that He will give us when He comes again, but we must turn our hearts to hear the voice of God’s messengers calling to us in His Word, speaking to us in those around us, and relayed by fellow-Christians each day until then. Our ears must be tuned to hear the Lord, to catch the sound of His voice, to understand the meaning of His message, and to obey His call to righteousness in our lives. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself said, “Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it” (*St. Luke 11:28*) and declared that those who hear and do the word of God are His mother and His brethren (*St. Luke 8:21*). Those that not only hear but also obey the word of God stand close to the Lord Jesus, and are walking with Him in their daily lives. It is this intimate relationship and communion with the Lord Jesus Christ that must characterize the Christian life.

It is here that the close connection between Advent and Christmas becomes apparent. Christmas as the celebration of our Lord and Savior’s birth is itself a mighty event, but because

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Advent and Christmas

(Continued from page 2) of the cultural and religious distance of the present world from the reality and saving power of His birth and life on this earth, the Second Advent of Christ to harvest the faithful and to judge the world must necessarily precede Christmastide. Jesus is no longer an infant but the King of kings and Lord of lords who will come again to judge the living and the dead. Unlike the commercial world, we do not think of the celebration of Christ's birth as a means of great material profit year by year, for preceding Christmas is Advent. Advent trumpets the truth that everyone must prepare to meet their God, their coming King, and in the face of this great event, material things such as the profits of wealth melt away.

Though the beautiful nativity narratives of *St. Matthew* and *St. Luke* feature prominently in Christmas services, pageants, and plays, the prologue of the *Gospel according to St. John* describes the enormous significance of Christ's birth: The eternal Word of God became flesh in this world in order to bring into the world the true light of life. It escapes our comprehension that God loved the world so much that He gave His only-begotten Son so that everyone who believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life (*St. John*

3:16). We cannot comprehend even how God became man except from what Holy Scripture tells us, that the Blessed Virgin Mary conceived Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit (*St. Matthew 1:20; St. Luke 1:35*). The birth of Jesus has transformed the lives of many. It still does and will continue to do so in the future since He has brought to mankind the means of salvation in Himself. By turning away from his sin and believing in the Lord

faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Having progressed from hearing the Word of God to obeying it more and more in the hope that by "daily increasing in the Holy Spirit more and more," we may "come unto God's everlasting kingdom" (Bishop's Prayer for Candidate at Confirmation, p. 297, *Book of Common Prayer*, 1928), we must share the Gospel as effectively as we can this Christmas and always. Jesus is re-

Go to church
Read your Bible
Obey what you read
Witness

Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, anyone can be born again and receive forgiveness from God and the gift of the Holy Spirit (*St. John 3:3-8; Acts 2:38*). It does not depend on whether we can pay a high rent or whether we have a nice car or whether we are young or old or on any possible condition for success in this material life on earth. It depends on the grace of God from the beginning and the obedience of our

turning soon! Time is short. Let us go forth with joy to share the Gospel message!

— *The Reverend Christopher Parrish*

Our Chapel Family Prayer List

O God, the Creator and Preserver of all mankind, we humbly beseech Thee for all sorts and conditions of men; that Thou wouldest be pleased to make Thy ways known unto them, Thy saving health unto all nations. More especially we pray for Thy holy Church universal; that it may be so guided and governed by

Thy good Spirit, that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life. Finally, we commend to Thy fatherly goodness:

Archbishop
Foley Beach;
Bishop Bill
Ilgenfritz;

Canon
Michael Penfield,
our Vicar-General;
Father Chris Parrish;
Deacon Peter Vogel; and
Deacon Linda Bracken;
also all those who serve
as Thy ministers in governing our nation and state, particularly:
President Donald Trump;
and
Governor Jerry Brown;

as well as all those who are any ways afflicted, or distressed, in mind, body, or estate; especially those for whom our prayers are desired:

the soldiers, sailors, marines, airmen, police officers, firefighters, and pilots who protect us every day; our persecuted Christian brothers and sisters throughout the world;

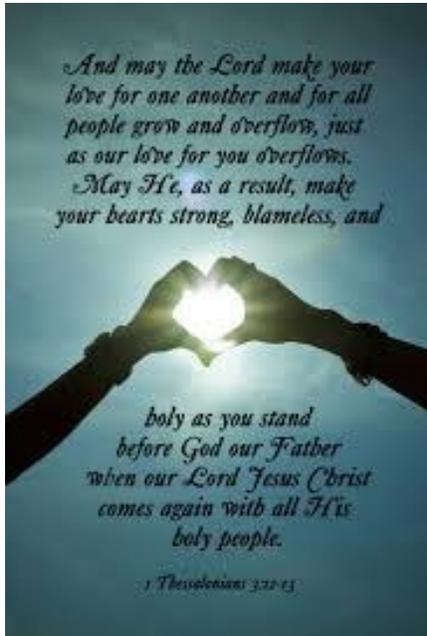
all refugees;
all who have suffered bereavement or loss of their homes or property in the southern California wildfires;

Yoshihiko and Hideko Ikegami;
Scott Guinn;
Meghan;
Tony Brown;
Kim Vogel;
Jim and Edna Davis;
Estelle Wilson;
Julia McNeely;
Joya de Rossett;
Sharon De Souza;

Debbie;
Scott;
Brittany;
Chuck;
Don Cottam;
James and Tanya Theiler;
Christian McKagan and his parents;
Lois Martins;
Dale Quinn;
Lisa;
Ben;

Marion;
Max;
Bishop Richard Boyce;
Dorian;
Kate Ward;
Kendra, Dan, Emmalyn, and Dayna Pack;
Ernst Hernandez;
Ray and Elodia Boreham;
Jan Martins;
Louanne Norman;
Reagan and the Stanko family;
Elizabeth Ann and her husband;
Stephen;
safety on the highways for all who commute, especially during rush hour;
the life and continuing longevity of St. Luke's Chapel in the Hills;
and for all those who are in our hearts,
that it may please Thee to comfort and relieve them, according to their several necessities; giving them patience under their sufferings, and a happy issue out of all their afflictions. And this we beg for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Please note: This prayer list was current as of December 1st. Please contact Father Parrish to make corrections.



Ministry Update: Emergency Food Pantry

Thank you for your support of our Emergency Food Pantry mission! The donations you place in the wicker basket in the Narthex are taken to the Downtown Palo Alto Food Closet for distribution. Here's the Food Closet's current wish list:

Soups

- hearty soups, like Progresso soups with meat, are needed;
- a good choice of soups would be helpful;
- any soup, especially other than tomato or broth soups, welcome!

Canned Meals

- pork 'n' beans
- chili
- corned beef
- Spaghetti-os
- meat ravioli
- beef tamales

Canned Meats

- Spam
- Vienna sausages
- roast beef
- chicken
- any canned meat other than tuna would be great!

Fruits and Vegetables

- cranberry sauce in cans
- canned yams or sweet potatoes
- canned green peas
- beets in cans

Other Foods

- dry soups
- hot and cold cereals
- pasta
- jams and jellies
- salt and pepper
- gravy in cans

Beverages

- instant coffee
- hot chocolate in

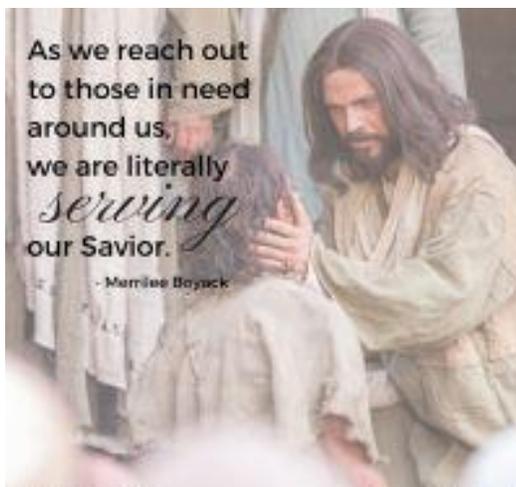
packets

- apple cider
- bottled water
- Capri Sun drink pouches
- no tea bags for now

Non-Food Items

- travel-size shampoo
- travel-size mouthwash
- soap
- disposable razors
- plastic spoons (no forks or knives, please)
- ziplock bags
- toilet tissue
- paper towels
- cotton tube socks
- grocery bags with handles are always needed!

– Debbie Patteson



Parish Postings

Please note that there will be no 10:00 AM Morning Prayer or noon Holy Communion services in December. All Sunday morning worship services will be the celebration of Holy Communion at 10:00 AM. The usual worship schedule will resume in January.



Please also note that Bible Study will meet for the last time in 2017 on Sunday, December 3rd. Bible Study will resume on Sunday, January 7th, at 9:15 AM with the study of *Zechariah 8*. All are welcome!



St. Luke's Chapel in the Hills will host its annual Carol Sing-along on Sunday, December 10th, at noon. Please join us!



It is the custom of our Chapel Family to decorate the sanctuary at Christmastime with poinsettias which honor our family members and friends who have joined the Church Expectant. If you wish to offer poinsettias, please do the following by Sunday, December 10th:

- donate \$10 to the Altar Guild for the plant (please note this allocation on your check memo line or offertory envelope); and
- send Father Parrish the memorial announcement as you wish it to appear in our Christmastide bulletins.

Thank you!



Here at St. Luke's, we like to thank our local firefighters with homemade holiday cookies and other treats. Kindly set aside some of your goodies as you do your baking, and bring your contributions to church with you on Sunday, December 24th. Thank you!



Christmastide services will begin with Holy Communion on Sunday, December 24th, at 11:15 PM.



We will celebrate our Lord's Incarnation on Monday, December 25th, with Holy Communion at 10:00 AM.



Upcoming Events

Sunday, December 3rd
The First Sunday in Advent

Bible Study: Zechariah

9:15 AM

Holy Communion
with Blessing of the Crèche and Healing Service
10:00 AM

Sunday, December 10th
The Second Sunday in Advent

Holy Communion

10:00 AM

Annual Carol Sing-along
noon

Sunday, December 17th
The Third Sunday in Advent

Holy Communion

10:00 AM

Sunday, December 24th
The Fourth Sunday in Advent

Firefighters' Christmas Cookies delivery date

Holy Communion

10:00 AM

Holy Communion

11:15 PM

Monday, December 25th
The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Holy Communion

10:00 AM

Sunday, December 31st
The First Sunday in Christmas

Holy Communion

10:00 AM

Sunday, January 7th
The First Sunday after Epiphany

Bible Study: Zechariah 8

9:15 AM

Holy Communion

10:00 AM



Joy to the world! The Lord is come;
Let earth receive her King;
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven and nature sing,
And heaven, and heaven, and nature sing!

Photograph by Clark Patteson



The Hillside Messenger

A PUBLICATION OF
ST. LUKE'S CHAPEL IN THE HILLS
ANGLICAN CHURCH

A PARISH OF
THE CONVOCATION OF THE WEST,
PART OF THE
MISSIONARY DIOCESE OF
ALL SAINTS IN
THE ANGLICAN CHURCH
IN NORTH AMERICA

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Worship Schedule

St.

Luke's Chapel in the Hills is a traditional Anglican parish which uses the 1928 edition *Book of Common Prayer*. We invite you to join us for worship soon!

*"A place
where the Bible is taught."*



Biblical in teaching.
Liturgical in worship.
Loving in practice.

First Sunday of each month
Holy Communion with Healing Service
10:00 AM

Second and fourth Sundays each month
Office of Daily Morning Prayer
10:00 AM

Said Holy Communion
noon

Please note that both services on Feast Days occurring on these Sundays will be Holy Communion.

Third and fifth Sunday each month and Feast Days
Holy Communion
10:00 AM